

What is claimed is:

1. An Internet broadcast billing system having a billing server that bills the user of a user terminal that has viewed the program of broadcast data sent to the user terminal via the Internet from a broadcast facility, wherein a billing server is constructed to carry out the steps of:

- 5       distributing encryption keys for encrypting the broadcast data or decrypting the encrypted broadcast data to the broadcast facility and the user terminal that will receive the broadcast data depending on requests from the broadcast facility or the user terminal;
  - storing the viewing starting time of the program and user information;
  - periodically updating the encryption keys;
  - 10       carrying out confirmation of the reception of the encryption keys;
  - canceling the distribution of a new encryption key during the next periodic key update in the case that a request to stop the viewing of the program is received from the user terminal or in the case that a confirmation of reception during the update of the encryption key is not obtained and determining that the reception has been terminated;
  - 15       and
  - carrying out billing processing so as to bill the amount of time that the user of the user terminal viewed the program.

2. An Internet broadcast billing system according to Claim 1 wherein the billing server and the broadcast facility are formed in the same system.

3. An Internet broadcast billing system having a billing server that bills the user of a user terminal that views a program of broadcast data transmitted to the user terminal side

via the Internet from the broadcast facility, wherein the billing server is constructed to carry out the steps of:

- 5           receiving the unencrypted broadcast data output from the broadcast facility;  
          encrypting broadcast data that has not been encrypted by using an encryption key;  
          distributing the encryption key to the user terminal for decrypting the encrypted broadcast data depending on the request from the user terminal;
- 10          storing the viewing commencement time of the program and the user information;  
          carrying out updating of the encryption key periodically;  
          carrying out confirmation of the reception of the encryption key;  
          canceling distribution of the new encryption keys during the next periodic
- 15          encryption key update in the case that a request for terminating the viewing of the program being viewed is received from the user terminal and in the case that confirmation of reception of the encryption key during updating is not obtained and determining that the reception has been terminated; and  
          carrying out billing processing so that the user of the user terminal is billed
- 20          depending on the amount of viewing time.